

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services and Education Appropriations
2358 Rayburn Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services and Education Appropriations
1016 Longworth Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We write to request that you provide an appropriation of \$610 million for the Minority AIDS Initiative in the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2010. We also request that you state clearly the amounts designated for this initiative, either in the bill itself or the accompanying report language.

Racial and ethnic minorities are severely and disproportionately impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States. African Americans account for 49% of new AIDS diagnoses, although only 12% of the population is black. Hispanics account for 19% of new AIDS cases, although only 15% of the population is Hispanic. Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders account for 1% of new AIDS cases, and American Indians/Alaska Natives account for up to 1%. Combined, minorities represent 67% of new HIV infections, 71% of new AIDS cases, 67% of people living with HIV/AIDS, and 70% of deaths caused by AIDS.

These statistics demonstrate the tremendous importance of the Minority AIDS Initiative. This critical initiative provides funds to community-based organizations and healthcare providers to help them address the HIV/AIDS epidemic within the minority populations they serve. The Minority AIDS Initiative is designed to enable organizations and providers in minority communities to improve their capacity to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate care and services. Thus, it fills gaps in prevention, testing, treatment, surveillance, infrastructure, outreach and education across communities of color.

We urge you to provide \$610 million for the Minority AIDS Initiative in fiscal year 2010. We thank you for your attention to our concerns, and we look forward to working with you to expand programs for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in minority communities throughout the United States.

Sincerely,

Marko Watts

Ileana Ros-Lettines

Madeline J. Bordallo

J-M Phit

Quinn

JK Butterfield

Jh P. Sch

John Lewis

Donna F. Edwards

Alfred Hughes

James S. Aron

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